THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Fluctuations in the population of wild animals is a natural phenomenon and various reasons like predation, diseases, competition, man-animal conflict, heat stroke, etc. are attributed to it. However, there are no reports available with the Ministry showing decrease in the population of Red Pandas.

(c) and (d) Central Government provides financial and technical assistance to the State/UT Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.*, 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for activities aimed at the protection and conservation of wildlife including Red Pandas and their habitats. Funds are released to State/UT Governments only after the receipt of utilisation certificates for the fund released during the previous financial years. There are no such instances noticed, where large amount meant for conservation including for Red Pandas, have not been utilised.

Impact of G.M. food on health

3236. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Green peace, in a recent report, has highlighted the dangers of genetically modified food produced in India;

(b) if so, the safety mechanisms adopted by India in this regard;

(c) whether Government is aware that trees and traditional ayurvedic medicinal herbs are being subjected to genetic engineering; and

(d) if so, the details of the genetically modified food and its impact on health and environment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Ministry has received representations from several NGOs alleging the ill-effects of genetically modified food on environment and human health.

(b) India's biotechnology regulatory system is governed by the "Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989" under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These Rules cover the areas of research as well as activities involving manufacture, use, import, export, storage and large scale applications of Genetically Modified (GM) organisms and products. These Rules are supplemented by the biosafety guidelines for evaluating environmental and health safety aspects of GM food crops. The biosafety guidelines are updated regularly and follow international norms prescribed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, CODEX Alimentarius Commission and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). All GM crops are extensively tested for their biosafety prior to commercial release.

The biosafety assessment includes environment safety assessment (pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of the protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, and baseline susceptibility studies etc.) and health safety assessment (composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies, and feeding studies on fish chicken, cows and buffaloes etc.) The biosafety data are available in the public domain and can be accessed at *http://www.envfor.nic.in/divisions/csurv/geac/geac* home.html and *http://www.igmoris.nic.in*

(c) Preliminary laboratory based research has been initiated by a few institutions on eucalyptus, bamboo, casuarina, rubber, bell pepper, brahmi, amla, ashwagandha, ginger and anntmool. However, so far no transgenic with these trees or medicinal plants has been developed except rubber which is also under greenhouse studies.

(d) Does not arise.

Wild animals

3237. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the detailed statistics of wild animals like tiger, bear, elephant, lion, black bucks, cheetal, dear and leopard from 2000 to 2009, State-wise and whether there statistics are correct;

(b) if not, whether forest department officers are giving wrong figures to protect their services and the census method is not correct; and

(c) whether Government would implement a different method to get the correct statistics?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Comprehensive and nation *wide* population estimation of wildlife (except for flagship species like tiger, elephant, etc.) has not been carried out/collated at Central Government level. The details of the all India estimation of tiger carried out during 2001-02 (using earlier methodology) as well as the latest all India estimation of tiger, carried out during 2006-2008 are at Statement-I and II respectively (*See* below). However, the latest estimation cannot be compared with the previous estimations on account of the modified methodology adopted. Similarly, the details of the all India enumeration of wild elephants carried out in 2002 and 2007-08 are at Statement-III (*See* below). Further, as per the estimations carried out during 2001 and 2005, the population of Lions in Gir forests were 327 and 359±10 respectively.

Population estimation of wild animals are based on the best scientific knowledge available and the methodology adopted for such estimation is subjected to refinement/modification from time to time based on the advances in knowledge and technology. There are no such reports